



Hardship

POLICY

Rationale

The Education & Training Reform Act empowers School Councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds. School Council recognises that some families experience financial hardship (wants to pay but cannot) from time to time and in a quest to ensure the best possible education for each child, the following opportunities are available for all families at our school.

Aim

To provide opportunities for children of families experiencing financial hardship to participate in the full breadth of educational experiences as are enjoyed by all students.

Implementation

School Council supplements Department of Education and Training funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items:-

- **Essential Education Items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide eg: stationary booklists and uniforms etc.
- **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user pays basis and parents can choose whether or not their child participates eg: instrumental music tuition or instrument hire, camps and excursions etc.

In addition, School Council invites parents to make donations by means of:-

- **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which are non-compulsory donations for additional curriculum related resources and equipment as well as specific projects eg: library resources, grounds projects and technologies.
- Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all annual essential payments and voluntary contributions six weeks prior to the due date along with a recommended payments schedule where possible.
- The Parent Payments schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate), essential payment dates, options to make payments by instalments, clear definitions of the category of any payments (ie: Essential, Optional or Voluntary)
- No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.
- Parents will be made aware of any government financial support schemes (eg: the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund - CSEF), and payments may be aligned with these benefits plus advice to parents to contact the principal if they require support or additional information.
- Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the business manager or principal.
- A second-hand school uniform program is available, as well as the State School's Relief program for families in financial need.
- For families opting to not participate in the One-to-One Digital Device program, Port Melbourne Primary School will have alternative devices available which will provide students access to

technology. These devices will be shared with other students. Students will not be able to take an alternative device off the school grounds.

- School Council will also make available a modest annual discretionary budget that the principal may use to assist families experiencing financial hardship.
- The school commits to engage with families disconnected from the school who may be experiencing hardship and need financial support for school costs.
- All payments and non-payments by families, and participants in any school financial support programs will be strictly confidential.
- This policy and implementation will be communicated via the school website.

Evaluation

School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually. In doing so, Council will also consider its financial support programs and any Departmental advice or instruction.

Ratified by School Council: **October 2016**

Review due: **October 2017**